

The Good Companions VETERINARY CLINIC

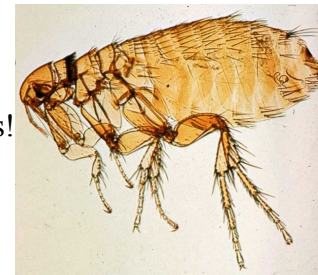
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PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE: FLEAS

Although there are different species of flea any species of flea can live on any host, so cats and dogs will quite happily share and multiply their fleas!



Flea life cycle

Although fleas can be a problem for your pets all year, flea populations typically explode about 5–6 weeks after the weather starts to warm up.



EGG STAGE

A female lays about 2,000 eggs in her lifetime. In one day, a single female flea can lay up to 50 eggs. The eggs aren't sticky – some may quickly fall off your pet and into areas of your home. In two to five days, the eggs hatch.

LARVAL STAGE

After hatching, the larvae head toward dark places around your home and feed on "flea dirt" – excrement of the partially digested blood of your pet. The larvae grow, molt twice, then spin cocoons, where they grow to pupae.

PUPA STAGE

Immature fleas spend approximately 8–9 days in their cocoon. During this time, they continue to grow to adulthood, waiting for the signals that it is time to emerge.

ADULT STAGE

Full-grown adults detect heat, vibrations and exhaled carbon dioxide from inside their cocoons, telling them a host is nearby. The adults leave their cocoons, hop onto a host, find a mate and begin the life cycle all over again.

The entire life cycle can be as short as 3–4 weeks.

DOES MY PET HAVE FLEAS?

All pets will pick up fleas when outside, mixing with other animals, or from the flea reservoir that may be residing in your house.

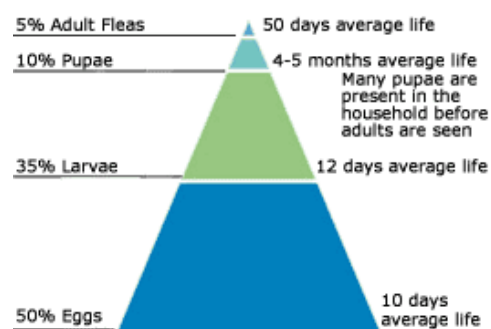
Fleas are small and fast moving, and your pet's hair coat is dense, so you are unlikely to see fleas on your pet – if you can see fleas you have a big problem! We usually diagnose fleas on your pet by looking for flea faeces. Flea faeces are digested blood and sit within your pet's coat like specks of black dandruff. A wet paper test is probably the most sensitive way to detect 'flea dirt'. By brushing your pet's coat onto a piece of wet white paper flea dirt can be identified as they dissolve and give a pinky brown halo.

FLEA TREATMENT OPTIONS

TREATING YOUR PET

We recommend using spot-on flea preparations to treat your pet. There are many makes of spot on flea treatment available, but not all are the same. A good flea treatment will kill a high percentage of fleas as fast as possible to stop the adult fleas being able to lay eggs and create a reservoir within the environment. Many of the flea treatments available from us not only kill adult fleas, but also stop the larva from being able to develop into adult fleas, thus breaking the life cycle in 2 places and giving far better control. Contact the practice to discuss the best flea treatment for your pet.

TREATING THE ENVIRONMENT



The diagram above demonstrates the 'flea iceberg'. The fleas that we see on our pets, and kill with older methods of flea control constitute only 5% of the flea population, the other 95% of the flea population is as life stages that reside in the environment as they develop into adult fleas.

If you have seen adult fleas on your pet you will probably have an underlying reservoir of fleas in your carpets and your pet's bedding. We would therefore recommend that in addition to treating the fleas on your pet, you use a household spray to eliminate the flea reservoir.